

The Center for Citizenship and Social Responsibility

The Center for Citizenship and Social Responsibility (CCSR) is a district-wide after school program that is dedicated to making the community and the world a better place to live. At each school, there is a CCSR advisor who guides students in the development and implementation of a project with the goal of improving the lives of those in the community or in the world. The students select a project that is important to them and will help others. They work individually and in small groups, usually two or three students, to plan and complete the project in the course of a school year. We also believe by supporting students with appropriate learning activities, we can prevent them from becoming addicted to harmful substances, develop positive self-awareness, encourage teamwork and cooperation, improve self-esteem, and develop leadership and interpersonal skills.

The Cummings grant received in 2017 allowed us to create the Center for Citizenship and Social Responsibility, a program designed to enhance social emotional learning. The mission of the CCSR is to develop responsible citizens and global leaders who will be positive contributors to society. Our students address social issues such as addiction, racism, depression, suicide, and bigotry, and work on broader global issues such as climate change, community safety, and immigration.

Over the past four years, over 3,000 students in grades K-12 have participated in our mini-courses, clubs and activities. Most importantly, over 200 community projects have been completed. Using project-based learning (PBL) methodology, students gain knowledge, learn to problem solve, and develop leadership skills. This is accomplished by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, problem, or challenge. Since PBL incorporates real-life experiences for students by working to help others, the learning has a lasting positive effect on their self-image, self-confidence, and ability to empathize and understand others. Our instructional methodology benefits students in three ways: students develop important leadership skills, their self-image and self-confidence are strengthened, and the needs of others are addressed.

The following are sample PBL projects that our students have completed in the past two years; a complete list of over 100 projects can be found on our website (www.medfordccsr.org).

- Initiated and passed a ban on plastic bags in Medford
- Raised \$4,000 to create a permanent monument to honor enslaved people who died in Medford
- Installed a 3D crosswalk at the Brooks and Roberts Elementary Schools
- Collected and delivered a truck full of supplies for victims of Hurricane Harvey in Houston
- Organized Medford's Diversity Day - a student-run festival to celebrate diversity and inclusion
- Organized a Walk for Veterans; over six thousand dollars was raised

- Started an award-winning English Learner Give Back Program, a user-friendly website where English Learners can learn how to perform basic tasks around Medford High School
- Educated faculty, students, and staff on how to support our LGBTQ+ population
- Started a Restorative Justice Project to provide an opportunity for students to talk about all sides of a conflict and be accountable for their actions
- Raised funds, purchased and installed an electric car charging station at Medford Vocational High School

In addition, The Center is working with school administration to develop a system-wide initiative to integrate social-emotional learning, citizenship, resiliency, and social intelligence into the district curriculum and activities.

Student-created projects are the major focus of the CCSR; however, the CCSR also provides SEL support for the school district. We provided motivational speakers such as Dr. Sanjiv Chopra of Harvard Medical School, Dr. Roberts Brooks, a Clinical Psychologist, and Richard Blanco, a renowned poet, who will speak this fall. In addition, when aligned with our mission, we have provided mini-grants for classroom projects, field experiences, and supplies and materials for students, faculty, and staff.

In order to share our work, we have created the CCSR website, www.medfordccsr.org, a Blog, a Facebook page, and an Instagram account, @medforccsr.

CCSR Advisory Board

Alan D. Solomont, Dean, Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service, Tufts University

Dr. Robert Brooks, Clinical Psychologist, Harvard Medical School
Dr. Sanjiv Chopra, Harvard Medical School

Dr. Susan E. Rivers, Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

Dr. Nancy E. Hill, Professor of Education, Harvard University
David McGillivray, President, DMSE Sports, Inc.
John D'Auria, President, Teachers 21

Shirley Mark, Director, Community Partnerships, Tisch College of Citizenship & Public Service

Roy E Belson, former Superintendent of Schools, Medford, MA

Barry R Sloane, President and CEO, Century Bank

Marie Cassidy, Coordinator, Medford Family Network

Dr. Stephen Ellenwood, Boston University

Dr. Celine Coggins, CEO of Teach Plus

Michael Olivieri, Executive Vice President, American City Business Journals

Thomas Walsh, President of The Bridge Center

Dr. John Perella, Headmaster, Medford High School

Bob Socci, Broadcaster, New England Patriots

Nicholas Tucci, Principal, McGlynn K-8 sch

Essential Elements of the CCSR

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

PBL is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge, problem solving and leadership skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge. Since PBL incorporates real life experiences for students, by working on the that help others, the learning has a lasting positive effect on their self-image and understanding of others.

PBL: Essential Project Design Elements

Key Knowledge, Understanding, and Success Skills - The project is focused on student learning goals, including standards-based content and skills such as critical thinking/problem solving, communication, collaboration, and self-management.

Challenging Problem or Question - The project is framed by a meaningful problem to solve or a question to answer, at the appropriate level of challenge.

Sustained Inquiry - Students engage in a rigorous, extended process of asking questions, finding resources, and applying information.

Authenticity - The project features real-world context, tasks and tools, quality standards, or impact – or speaks to students’ personal concerns, interests, and issues in their lives.

Student Voice & Choice - Students make some decisions about the project, including how they work and what they create.

Collaboration – working on a common goal/project students learn the importance of teamwork and go from me to we.

Reflection - Students and teachers reflect on learning, the effectiveness of their inquiry and project activities, the quality of student work, obstacles and how to overcome them.

Critique & Revision - Students give, receive, and use feedback to improve their process and products.

Public Product - Students make their project work public by explaining, displaying and/or presenting it to people beyond the classroom

Educational benefits

Afterschool activities – does not interfere with daily schedules or curriculum

Project based methodology – student and staff create projects that culminate with a demonstration of the learning outcome - project

Authentic experience for students – individual or small groups of projects that are designed and implemented by students

Projects address the need to make the world a better place to live – for a single student, school, group, community, state, USA to the world

Projects/Activities allow students to work with a wide range of peers from different ethnic groups, gender identifications and social classes

Promotes empathy, compassion and leadership skills

Improves self-esteem and self-confidence

Empathy Competencies

Kindness – caring about the circumstances of others

Identification – identifying with the plight of others

Understanding – the ability to comprehend social issues and the impact on others

Motivation – develop a plan of action to address an issue/problem that helps others